



Connecticut Farm Bureau Association
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Submitted by: Henry N. Talmage, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association, a statewide nonprofit membership organization representing 5,000 families dedicated to farming and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Senator Doyle, Representative Reed and members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

Testimony in support of:

Raised Bill No. 168 AN ACT CONCERNING TRASH-TO-ENERGY FACILITIES.

The Connecticut Farm Bureau supports this Bill which will require the chairperson of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority to conduct a study pertaining to trash-to-energy facilities. In particular we recommend that the chairperson evaluate existing and potential trash-to-energy facilities for their appropriateness for the utilization of waste heat for food production through Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA). Connecticut has a strong existing greenhouse industry that is unique in New England and our location between Boston and New York as well as the strong demand for fresh fruits and vegetables year round represents a potentially large new market for CT grown products.

Raised Bill No. 5242 AN ACT CONCERNING AGRICULTURAL VIRTUAL NET METERING.

The Connecticut Farm Bureau fully supports Raised Bill 5242 which fixes an important flaw in the current agricultural virtual net metering law. The bill amends the definition of "agricultural customer host" to allow for leases or long-term contracts for agricultural virtual net metering facilities. Whereas the intent to limit the definition to farmer-owned facilities was probably designed to limit participation to legitimate farming operations, in reality it has made very difficult for farmers to participate in the program. Agricultural virtual net metering projects often include third-party investors that are not interested in joining the farm business. Furthermore, many farming families have their land in a separate corporation or LLC which may have different owners from the operating company. The end result is that legitimate farming operations interested in utilizing the agricultural virtual net metering cannot because of the restriction. HB 5242 solves this problem and we encourage its adoption.

In addition to the existing language contained in the bill, the Connecticut Farm Bureau would also like to encourage the Energy and Technology Committee to amend Raised Bill 5242 to allow farmers to utilize the Residential Service Heating (RSH) natural gas rate and the Residential Service General (RSG) natural gas rate. This would allow farm operations that meet the state definition of agriculture to utilize natural gas without being subject to demand charges. This is especially important in farming operations where the use of natural gas is very seasonal such as heating of greenhouses or the running of back-up generators. Currently farm operations are able to utilize the Residential Electric Service and the Residential Electric Heating service rates for electricity and this proposal would offer similar treatment of natural gas.

Connecticut Farm Bureau Association - *The Voice of Connecticut Agriculture*